

PeaceBattle Projects

1. Attentive in Darkness: Brief Statement of Vision/Mission

Simone Weil, a Christian mystic, believes that those who suffer have no other need than those capable of giving them complete attention. There are many people in the United States who suffer on inner city streets at night (e.g., the homeless, prostitutes, drug addicts). Providing attention to those who suffer, especially in darkness can heal many. The PeaceBattle project is similar to the 2001 HBO presentation *Naked States: America Undercover*, in which cameras follow photographer Spencer Tunick as he attempts to achieve his ambitious goal of photographing large groups of people who pose naked for the fun of it on all seven continents. Instead of photographing nude people in large groups across the globe, my idea is to use such energy to get large groups of volunteers to stand together on street corners at night where there is suffering, prostitution, racial profiling and any other injustice. To gather in organized community nonviolently and change the scene by virtue of the community gathered. To get someone like Hollywood director, Tom Shadyac to document a series of such events.

Brief Description of Project

Inner cities are in need of a communal attention to neglected and abandoned places. I propose that spiritual groups and nonprofits organize witnesses of 1444 people willing to stay up all night and walk the most dangerous parts of a city. This remnant of 1444 people would bear gifts of coffee, food, and information about inner city ministries, medical and shelter services. The PeaceBattle mission is simply to be present to those who suffer at night.

Evaluation of Project

Primarily, the success of this project will be defined through how these 1444 people provide feed back to city officials about what they witnessed. Churches, Temples, Mosques, other Spiritual Groups and nonprofits will be recruited by the PeaceBattle Institute and provide directions for these 1444 people as to where to volunteer, provide direction and organization for being present on inner-city streets.

Fundraising: Goal: \$500,000

2. Restorative Justice: Brief Statement of Vision/Mission

Intentional work needs to be done to reform the penitential institution. Instead of an “accident waiting to happen” approach, communities can become proactive in anticipating systems and structures that entice people to prison and cause high rates of recidivism. Restorative Justice aims for the offender to be brought back into society as a useful contributing member and the victim restored. The offender seeks to restore the loss incurred by the victim in the form of goods or services. In Restorative Justice, offenders are held accountable for what they have done but instead of simply punishing them, attention to the affliction caused allows both offender and victim to do something that produces good for them both. **Restoration becomes something that changes them instead of fixing the eternal identities of offender and victim.**

Brief Description of Project

First, through victim and offender mediation, persistent problems of violence are directly addressed and dealt with. This is the process in which an impartial third party helps the victim(s) and offender(s) to communicate, either directly or indirectly. The mediation process can lead to greater understanding for both parties and sometimes to tangible reparation. John Braithwaite’s concept of reintegrative shaming has provided a theoretical base for the practice of mediation.¹ ‘Shaming’ is a more effective sanction for unacceptable behavior than punishment, provided that it does not impose rejection and stigma for its own sake, but comprises measures which reintegrate the offender back into the community. This concept was developed following observations of the family group conferencing programs based on traditional Maori justice, where victims and offenders, their families and supporters, met together to discuss the offence and its effects on their community. Offenders are held accountable and encouraged to feel shame, but the aim of the conferences is to resolve conflict caused by the offence rather than inflicting punishment. Secondly, restorative justice should become a paramount practice for spiritual groups. Every spiritual group should have an organization to help their local communities negotiate the bureaucracy of volunteering in prisons as well as the fear of first volunteering in prisons. Spiritual headquarters should prescribe to all their members specific programs to welcome inmates and reintroduce them into society. Local spiritual groups should be involved in their closest penitentiary providing volunteer assistance addressing the systemic causes of why people go to prison. This should be mandatory of all spiritual groups.

Evaluation of Project

Local spiritual groups should regularly report to their headquarters so as to provide data of work being done in their local areas. For example, National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches should provide global patterns and insights into the accumulated data so that local churches can become more adept at determining outcomes for inmates.

Fundraising Goal: \$1,000,000.

¹ John Braithwaite, Lecture, “Standards For Restorative Justice” At United Nations Crime Congress: Ancillary Meeting Vienna, Austria, 2000

3. The Poor Will Not Always Be with Us: Brief Statement of Vision/Mission

The United Nations issued specific Millennium Development Goals (MDGS) to end poverty . Among these goals are achievable outcomes that require systematic work. The United States consumes one-fifth of the entire world's coffee supply, making it the largest consumer in the world. But few Americans realize the effects on agriculture workers in the coffee industry who often toil in what can be described as “sweatshops in the fields.” Many small coffee farmers receive grossly underpaid wages for their coffee, forcing them into a cycle of poverty. I propose the achievable goal of providing coffee growers around the world fair trade practices.

Brief Description of Project

Buy coffee that only provides information of fair trade. The insignia to look for is:



To become Fair Trade certified, stringent international criteria are put in place. Fair practices such as paying a minimum price per pound of \$1.26 provides credit to farmers, and technical assistance such as help transitioning to organic farming.

Evaluation of Project

I encourage readers to participate in the follow up work found on the following website:
<http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/fairtrade/coffee/>

4. Caring for the Temple of God

Brief Statement of Vision/Mission

Health care in the United States can become more efficient for those most vulnerable through preventive health care.

Brief Description of Project

Local Churches, Temples and Mosques provide weekly accountability groups for dietary habits (how well a person adhered to weekly caloric goals), exercise habits (how well a person met the weekly allotted time of exercise). I propose that interfaith communities go into partnership with organizations like Weightwatchers, an organization that understands the methodology of accountability groups.

Evaluation of Project

Interfaith communities can hire personal trainers and medical professionals to provide professional assessment. Those who participate in accountability groups can measure their better health and increasing income as result of lower health costs.

Fundraising: Goal \$300,000

5. Peace on Earth

Brief Statement of Vision/Mission

Many nation states require compulsory military duty, even for two year stints. Because of the growing isolation of the United States, there could be more incentive for service in the Peace Corps (or similar organization) for high school graduates.

Brief Description of Project

Instead of high school graduates going immediately to college, I propose that they be compensated for one year of service to communities in need. Also, this could be incorporated in the first year of studies in a university or even the military.

Evaluation of Project

University and college students are increasingly frustrated with not knowing their vocation or specificity of study. Providing this year provides a reference point in which American students can evaluate their interests and have a clearer focus for their ambitions.

6. Making Nonviolence Exciting

Brief Statement of Vision/Mission

The entertainment industry makes its money off of violent imagery. A percentage of the income from Microsoft and Sony games should be given to alternative game software that makes nonviolence exciting. Computer games like *A Force More Powerful* provides a way to fight adversaries, dictators, military occupiers and corrupt rulers in a very unusual way. Instead of blowing things up, the gamer must strategize with non-military means. Experts on nonviolent conflict worked with game designers to provide this simulation game that teaches the strategy of nonviolent conflict. Youth groups (and adults) should learn to play such games.

Brief Description of Project

A Force More Powerful is the first of its kind but lacks the monumental support of Microsoft or Sony. I propose that churches call for a summit on gaming with Microsoft and or Sony to discuss an increase of games like *A Force More Powerful*. The Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles could organize this event. Such games could be used by many for education and entertainment.

Evaluation of Project

A committee needs to be formed in which those with business skills, knowledge of the gaming industry, and knowledge of youth culture can plan this event.

Fundraising: Goal \$400,000.

7. A Multicultural Pentecost

Brief Statement of Vision/Mission

Providing a different reference point for dueling groups (e.g., police racial profiling, gang activity, inner city violence, black on black crime and much more) can open young people to better lives. Creative and intentional cross cultural experiences can open the eyes of those bent on being eternal enemies.

Brief Description of Project

Spiritual Groups have for millennia learned how to create mission trips. Instead of planning said trips for one's own group, spiritual groups could creatively help municipalities create cross-cultural experiences for youth. What I have in mind are trips for inner city at risk kids to go to places like Tibet or Papua New Guinea. Such extraordinary experiences can provide transformative cultural perspectives for those caught in seemingly eternal conflicts. Just as Malcom X was transformed by traveling overseas, so too can many inner city youth.

Evaluation of Project

Most of the cost would be borne in air travel. Major airlines now out of financial straits could allocate monies every year for this venture. Given the outcomes of transformed lives, such costs would be well worth it considering the alternatives of violent deterministic living of many of our youth in inner cities.

Fundraising: Goal: \$1,000,000